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The *Hónglóu mèng* 紅樓夢 and its Sequels: Paths towards and away from Modernity

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Despite its display of an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of traditional Chinese culture, the mid-18th-century novel *Hónglóu mèng* 紅樓夢 by Cáo Xuěqín 曹雪芹 has struck many readers as being surprisingly modern.¹ The novel represents a path to modernity in at least three respects. First, it is psychologically far subtler than any other work of traditional Chinese fiction, and it may be analysed as an exploration of psychological forces pitched against each other. Second, it has more poly-semantic complexity than any other work of traditional Chinese fiction, merging as it does a multiplicity of plots, themes, ideas and ideologies, some of them mutually contradictory, into a larger artistic whole. Third, it has a strong tragic element, and while tragedies are one of the oldest forms of literature in the Western literary canon, their introduction into China is strongly associated with modernity.²

If the *Hónglóu mèng* represents a path to modernity, however, the reception of this novel seems to represent a step backwards, a path away from modernity. The novel's psychological subtleties tend to be lost,

¹ I would like to express my gratitude for comments from participants at the "Paths toward Modernity" conference in Prague, as well as scholars and students present at a lecture arranged by Kuo Yu-wen at the National Taiwan University in Taipei in November 2006.

² On the novel's psychological subtleness and poly-semantic complexity, see Eifring 2004 and the references there. On the tragic element in *Hónglóu mèng*, see Wáng Guówéi 1984. On the introduction of the tragedy as a dramatic genre into Chinese literature, see Natascha Gentz' contribution to this volume.

its multiple layers of meaning tend to be reduced, and wherever possible, its tragic elements are simply done away with and replaced with happy endings.

The reception of a complex novel like the *Hónglóu mèng* almost by necessity consists in the reduction of the novel to manageable chunks of meaning. Different readers will emphasise different aspects of the novel, to the exclusion of other aspects. Confronting such interpretations with "the text itself" will hopefully reveal the one-sidedness of the interpretations and expand our understanding both of the novel and of the processes of reading and interpretation.

In the history of the reception of the *Hónglóu mèng*, this one-sidedness has privileged Lín Dàiyù 林黛玉 and the romantic aspects of the novel with a much more central role than the less sentimental aspects of the novel represented by, among others, Wáng Xifèng 王熙鳳. In addition, the reception of the novel typically casts Xifèng as a more unequivocally evil person than she is in the original novel.

There are many interesting sources for the reception of *Hónglóu mèng*, such as the critical commentaries that have followed the novel from the very beginning, the various prefaces also written right from the start, poems on the novel etc. One type of text that has been little explored as a source for the reception of the novel is the large number of sequels to the *Hónglóu mèng*.³ This is what I will attempt to do in the present paper.

Seeing sequels as evidence for the reception of a novel is not unproblematic, and my approach must be seen as an experiment. Sequels, in a much more obvious way than commentaries, have an agenda of their own. They are not primarily constructed to give interpretations of the novel, but to work as literary pieces in their own regard. Still, sequels are always based on interpretations of the original work, and even when they clearly deviate from it, they presumably tell us something about how the author of the sequel (who is at the same time a reader of the original work) would have liked the original work to be.

³ This conforms with what Hu Siao-chen (2004: 77) says in her treatment of one

Hónglóu mèng and its sequels

Depending on how we define the term "sequel", there exist anything between 13 and almost a hundred different sequels to the *Hónglóu mèng*. In a wide sense of the term, Zhao Jiànzhōng (1997) counts 98 sequels, including novels that borrow the names of the characters but not the storyline of the original, novels that borrow themes from the original but rewrite the plot, and more recent attempts to replace the last 40 chapters with alternative endings that modern textual research presumably shows to be more in line with Cáo Xuěqín's original intention. Many of these so-called sequels only have a very loose connection to the *Hónglóu mèng*.⁴ Zhao's main group of sequels, however, numbers only 13 works, of which most were written during the Qing dynasty. These are regular sequels in a narrow sense. While most of them build on the full 120-chapter version of the novel, three take off from Dàiyù's death in chapter 97, and one takes off from another sequel written by the same author.

In the present paper, I shall look into five of these sequels, viz. the first five sequels to appear after the novel was first printed in the early 1790s:

- *Hòu Hónglóu mèng* 後紅樓夢 by Xiāoyáozi 逍遙子 (printed 1796)
- *Xù Hónglóu mèng* 續紅樓夢 by Qín Zíchén 秦子忱 (printed 1799)
- *Qīlóu chóngmèng* 綺樓重夢 by Wáng Lánzhǐ 王蘭芷 (printed ca. 1799)
- *Hónglóu fù mèng* 紅樓復夢 by Chén Shàohǎi 陳少海 (printed 1805)
- *Xù Hónglóu mèng* 續紅樓夢 by Hǎipǔ zhǔrén 海圃主人 (printed ca. 1805)

In order to understand the readings of the *Hónglóu mèng* represented by these sequels, however, it is also necessary to treat what is (and certainly was) usually regarded as the last 40 chapters of the novel as a sequel in its own right. This sequel, whether it was written by Gāo È 高鶚 and Chéng Wěiyuán 程偉元 or somebody else, started a process of interpretation on which later sequels were forced to build. Although some readers continued to doubt the authenticity of the last 40 chapters,⁵ the repeated publication

⁴ As pointed out by McMahon (2004: 100), many independent novels, such as the *Èrǚ yīngxióng zhuàn* 兒女英雄傳, *Pīnhuā Bǎojiàn* 品花寶鑑, and *Qīnglóu mèng* 青樓夢, also build on the *Hónglóu mèng* and might be regarded as sequels, in which case the total number of sequels exceeds one hundred.

in print of the full 120-chapter version from 1791 onwards made it impossible to disregard them. From now on, most readers, probably including the sequel writers, simply looked upon the 120-chapter version as the original work. My analysis, therefore, will start by looking into the readings imposed on the novel by the last 40 chapters, which is in fact the very first sequel to the unfinished 80-chapter novel written by Cáo Xuěqín. For simplicity, I will continue to refer to them as "the last 40 chapters" and to Cáo's original work as "the first 80 chapters".

Beyond triangular love

The most conventional view of *Hónglóu mèng* is as a triangular love story. Lín Dàiyù is seen as the second most important character in the novel, after Jiǎ Bǎoyù 賈寶玉. Their love story, and the cruel intrusion of Xuě Bǎochāi 薛寶釵, eventually leading (in the last 40 chapters) to the marriage of Bǎoyù and Bǎochāi and the death of Dàiyù, is viewed as the main storyline. The main focus of the novel is understood to be life in the *Dàguān yuán* 大觀園 and the sentimental love that unfolds there, as well as the equally sentimental sadness at the falling apart of life in the garden and the loss of love. Of the "two worlds" of the *Hónglóu mèng* discussed by Yú Yingshí (1978), the conventional view gives clear priority to the world of love and sadness and the doomed relation between Bǎoyù and Dàiyù.

Nobody would seriously dispute the importance of the triangular love story and of the role of Dàiyù in large parts of the novel. But the *Hónglóu mèng* is a polyphonic novel, with several themes, plots and storylines working alongside each other, none of them having absolute priority over the other. The problem with the conventional view is not so much that it is wrong, as that it tends to reduce to background material aspects of the novel that do not fit into the triangular love story.

The many themes, plots and storylines associated with Wáng Xifèng are a case in point. Because the conventional view sees her primarily as an evil and destructive force, her role in the novel tends to be played down. A close reading of the text, however, not only shows how her greed and lust for power are balanced by a number of positive traits (her administrative

talent, her charm, her humour, her care for and protection of others, and her rare ability to face the dire consequences of her own misdeeds with some degree of self-reflection), but also that she is a much more central character than usually assumed. Along with Bǎoyù, she is one of the two main axes (or pillars) around which the narrative of the *Hónglóu mèng* revolves and evolves. The novel takes great pains to create a close structural relation between these two characters.

Xifèng vs. Dàiyù

Before we go on to look at the sequels, therefore, it will be useful to look briefly at Xifèng's role in the first 80 chapters.

Xifèng is actually a more central person in the novel than Dàiyù. Quantitatively, the love relation between Bǎoyù and Dàiyù has been calculated to account for only one tenth of the novel, and in most of the novel there is no reference to their love relation at all.⁶ Direct descriptions of the love relation between Bǎoyù and Dàiyù are mainly concentrated in chapters 17–36,⁷ and after chapter 45, the triangular love relation is not a central motif.⁸ As for Xifèng, her various names are mentioned more often than Dàiyù's,⁹ direct descriptions of her are more frequent,¹⁰ and a larger number of chapters have a substantial text on her.¹¹ After chapter 45, Dàiyù is a quite peripheral character, and even Bǎoyù is less central than Xifèng.¹²

⁶ Hú Wénwěi (1995).

⁷ Luó Shūhuá (1998: 306).

⁸ Zhōu Sìyuán (1998).

⁹ The names (Wáng) Xifèng 王熙鳳, Fèngjiě(r) 鳳姐兒, Fènggē(r) 鳳哥兒, Fèng làzi 鳳辣子, Fèng gūniang 鳳姑娘, Fèng yātou 鳳丫頭, Fèng ér 鳳兒, Liǎn èr nǎinai 璉二奶奶 occur 1319 times in the first 80 chapters of the novel, as opposed to 1100 times for (Lín) Dàiyù 林黛玉, Lín mèimei 林妹妹, Lín gūniang 林姑娘, Lín yātou 林丫頭, Xiāoxiāng fēizi 潇湘妃子, Pín'ér 顰兒, Pín-pín 顰顰, Pín yātou 顰丫頭, Pín qīng 顰卿.

¹⁰ According to Hú Wénwěi (1995), 23 percent of the novel contains direct descriptions of Xifèng, while only 20 percent contains direct descriptions of Dàiyù.

¹¹ According to Zhōu Wūchún (1997: 226f.), 44 chapters have a text of more than 500 characters concerning Xifèng, as opposed to only 37 chapters concerning Dàiyù.

More important than quantitative comparisons is the fact that Xifèng is a highly autonomous character, whose role is largely independent of Bǎoyù. She often acts as the main character in passages where Bǎoyù is absent, or even in passages where he is present but less central, and she is clearly a driving force behind the progression of the narrative. As a character, she stands out as the one who shows the clearest development in the course of the novel, from a self-assured and power-oriented character to a fearful person with deteriorating health and diminishing power, and with an increasing propensity for self-reflection. In contrast, Dàiyù is largely a satellite circling around Bǎoyù. She plays virtually no independent role in bringing the narrative forward, and she hardly develops at all as a character. Her autonomy as a character is restricted to a few lyrical—and admittedly unforgettable—passages, such as her burial of flowers, or her reading of the *Mùdān tīng* 牡丹亭. Apart from such passages, her relative centrality in the novel derives from her emotional intimacy and locational proximity to Bǎoyù.

Xifèng and Bǎoyù

Xifèng's centrality in the novel may also be seen from the way the author carefully constructs a number of structural links between her and Bǎoyù. Very roughly speaking, Bǎoyù stands at the head of the emotion-oriented and lyrical parts of the novel, while Xifèng stands at the head of the action-oriented and narrative (and at times quite dramatic) parts of the novel. The two are pillars on which the novel is founded. These two pillars act more or less like a pair in binary opposition, having some features in common and features of contrast. This is obvious from their very first appearance in the novel, in chapter 3, where they have a number of things in common:

Both arrive late, giving room for two lines of narrative, each focusing on one of them.

Both are heard before they are seen.

The two are the only persons of whom Dàiyù has heard her mother talk.

The clothing and appearance of both are described in some detail in long stretches of parallel prose.

Both of them are described as lacking in manners.

Some of these parallels are enforced by similarities in the tiny details of the wording:

也曾聽見母親說過 (*Xifèng*)

亦常聽得母親說過 (*Bǎoyù*)

一語未了，只聽後院中有人笑聲 (*Xifèng*)

一語未了，只聽外面一陣腳不響 (*Bǎoyù*)

心下想時，只見一群媳婦丫鬟圍擁著一個人從後門進來 (*Xifèng*)

心中想著，忽見丫鬟話未報完，已進來了一位年輕的公子 (*Bǎoyù*)

The parallelism between the two is reinforced in a number of other chapters. For instance, the two are shown to have a uniquely intimate relation to Qín Kěqīng 秦可卿 and Qín Zhōng 秦鍾. Because of their leading roles in the family, they are also uniquely singled out for feelings of jealousy, especially from Jiǎ Huán 賈環 and Zhào yíniáng 趙姨娘, who almost manage to kill them by means of sorcery (chapter 25).¹³ Both of them have personalities untypical of their gender, Bǎoyù being an effeminate young man, while Xifèng is a young woman with many traits usually associated with masculine values. Some of the parallels even work from one chapter to another at no little distance, as when Bǎoyù is conspicuously absent in a large part of Xifèng's birthday party in chapter 43, while Xifèng is absent in Bǎoyù's birthday party in chapter 63.

This interpretation of the *Hónglóu mèng* is, of course, but another reading of the novel. Counterarguments to the view that Xifèng is more central than Dàiyù are not difficult to find. For instance, chapter 1 fails to mention Xifèng, but contains a sweet little story about the heavenly predecessors to Bǎoyù and Dàiyù. And while chapter 2 does contain interesting parallels between Bǎoyù and Xifèng, it gives Dàiyù separate treatment and thereby seems to award her greater autonomy than Xifèng. And, most obviously, the parallels between Bǎoyù and Xifèng in chapter 3 are almost exclusively seen through the eyes of Dàiyù, again emphasising her role as an independent observer. Furthermore, the fact that Dàiyù does not bring forward the narrative of her own accord may be seen simply as a function of her part as a lyrical heroine, for whom narrative progression is

less central than emotional lyricism (as in the flower burial and her reading of the *Mūdān tíng*). My main point, therefore, is not to deny the importance of Dàiyù, but to highlight the role of Xifèng and aspects of the novel that others have been far too willing to overlook. By looking at some of the sequels, I will try to trace the early development of the one-sided view of the novel.

The last 40 chapters

The first sequel is what is usually described as the last 40 chapters of the novel. This sequel has a clear purpose: to create a readable end to the unfinished 80-chapter manuscript left behind by Cáo Xuěqín. Almost the entire 40-chapter work may be read in this light. Although not lacking in creativity, it hardly introduces any new plots or characters, apart from those that are carefully constructed to lead the story toward its final conclusion. This is in sharp contrast to the first 80 chapters, where new plots and characters are brought in continuously. As late as in chapter 79, for instance, Xià Jīngù 夏金桂 and the drama surrounding her are introduced for the first time as if the author has no plans of bringing his novel to an end. In contrast, as soon as we move beyond chapter 80, virtually every single passage may be read as an element in the large web of plots and subplots eventually leading to the conclusion of the novel.

The last 40 chapters take great pains to build on hints in the first 80 chapters, to be consistent (though not always successfully), and to pick up a number of loose ends that need to be completed before the novel can be brought to an end. Hints in the first 80 chapters that the last 40 chapters build on include indications that:

Dàiyù will die from sickness
 Bǎoyù and Bǎochāi will marry
 Bǎoyù will eventually become a monk
 Xifèng will be sick and die
 The Jiǎ family will have their property confiscated

But the way this is done is the creation of the author of the last 40 chapters. It is the work of a highly creative writer. Although the quality of the last 40 chapters is generally held to be lower than that of the first 80 chap-

Most importantly, the author of the last 40 chapters almost immediately gives Dàiyù back the prominence that she had in chapters 17–36, by focusing on the triangular love affair that had become quite peripheral after chapter 45. In chapters 81–98, other plots and subplots are largely subordinate to the main plot leading to Bǎoyù and Bǎochāi's marriage and Dàiyù's death.

Already in chapter 81, the relation between Bǎoyù and Dàiyù is reintroduced as a focus of interest, and the common assumption that they will marry is taken up in chapter 82. In the same chapter, Dàiyù has a nightmare in which she is sent out of the family to marry somebody else. In chapter 84, Xifèng proposes for the first time that Bǎochāi would be a better match for Bǎoyù than Dàiyù, and Grandmother Jiǎ agrees. The story culminates when Xifèng sets up her trap in chapter 96 and the marriage takes place and Dàiyù dies in chapters 97–98.

The story of Dàiyù's death at the very moment when Bǎoyù is fooled into marrying Bǎochāi is exceedingly sentimental, but it is also one of the most innovative and memorable highlights of the last 40 chapters. The success of this story has undoubtedly been an important factor in establishing the popular reading of the *Hónglóu mèng* as a triangular love story.

After chapter 98, however, Dàiyù is dead and largely absent, except in Bǎoyù's and a few other people's thoughts, in a few mentions of her coffin and burial, and in a scene in which Bǎoyù's soul leaves his body and sees Dàiyù in another realm of existence (chapter 116). Even in the last 40 chapters, therefore, Dàiyù is absent or nearly absent in well over half of the chapters.

One can hardly claim that the last 40 chapters treat Xifèng as a peripheral character. On the contrary, from the very beginning, she is the main driving force behind the plot leading to the marriage of Bǎoyù and Bǎochāi and the death of Dàiyù. And she remains a central character long after Dàiyù is dead, until she herself finally dies after prolonged illness in chapter 114. Still, the last 40 chapters lay the foundation for the interpretations of later generations of readers in at least two respects:

First, from chapter 81 until Dàiyù dies, Xifèng's centrality in the novel is basically due to her role in Dàiyù's tragic life and death. Her presence is im-

to create the plot surrounding the triangular love story. In this sense, her role is subordinate to that of Dàiyù.

Second, both before and after Dàiyù's death, the last 40 chapters treat Xifèng as a much more unequivocally evil person. By now, the whole story surrounding her centres on her guilt. The three tragedies at the centre of the narrative may all be seen as the results of her misdeeds: Bǎoyù and Bǎochāi's unhappy marriage, Dàiyù's death, and the fall of the Jiǎ family. In the end, her gradual weakening and painful and lonely death is seen as a just retribution for her own illdoings. Despite a few redeeming traits, like her care for her daughter Qiǎojiě 巧姐 and her positive relation to Liú lǎolao 劉姥姥, Xifèng's wickedness and guilt are taken much further in this sequel than in the first 80 chapters.

Although both the first 80 chapters and the Red Inkstone 脂硯齋 commentary contain hints that Dàiyù will die and Bǎoyù and Bǎochāi marry, the idea of Xifèng being the culprit, not to speak of her setting up a quite unlikely trap to achieve her goal, is the product of the author of the last 40 chapters. In 1819, a certain Xījī shānqiáo 犀脊山樵 claims to have seen an original version where the imperial concubine Yuánchūn 元春 is the one who orders the marriage between Bǎoyù and Bǎochāi. And while we have no guarantee that the version seen by him was any more original than the last 40 chapters as we read them today, this highlights the fact that the last 40 chapters reflect only one possible reading of the novel. It is, however, the one that all later sequels build on, and that has formed the popular and even the scholarly reception of the novel.

The sequels

The main overview of sequels to the *Hónglóu mèng* in English, by Keith McMahon (2004), has three sections: "The Improvement of Baoyu", "The Vindication of Daiyu", and "The Resolution of the Love Affair between Baoyu and Daiyu". The titles of these three sections tell us a number of things that bear on our subject.

First, the sequels in various ways transform the tragedy of the original work into a happy ending, and thus seek to restore justice for characters for whom the readers of the novel have invested positive feelings. This

40 chapters do not resolve the love affair between Bǎoyù and Dàiyù, they do at least partly restore the honour and the property of the Jiǎ family, after the family has first been raided and had all its possessions confiscated.

Second, the "improvement" of Bǎoyù refers to the process of turning Bǎoyù into a more conventional and therefore more acceptable person, who fulfils his duties to the family and to society. This process also starts in the last 40 chapters, where Bǎoyù does his duty as a filial son, taking his exams and producing an heir, before he eventually enters another realm as a bodhisattva-like figure.

Third, the titles of McMahon's article indicate that the two main characters of both the novel and the sequels are Bǎoyù and Dàiyù, and that the main theme is the love affair between them. As we have seen, this view is also largely a product of the heart-rending story of love and loss in the last 40 chapters.

To some extent, the same impression is given by the main Chinese and Taiwanese works on *Hónglóu mèng* sequels, by Zhào Jiànzhōng (1997), Lín Yìxuán (1999) and Wáng Xùchuān (2004). For instance, Wáng Xùchuān (pp. 294ff.) divides the sequels into three groups: those favouring Dàiyù over Bǎochāi, those favouring Bǎochāi over Dàiyù, and those praising both Dàiyù and Bǎochāi. Three of the four groups into which Lín Yìxuán (pp. 52ff.) divides the sequels also focus on the triangular love relation between Bǎoyù, Dàiyù and Bǎochāi.

At the same time, these works make it clear that the sequels are much more complex and varied than this simple division would indicate. For instance, Wáng Xùchuān (2004: 295) is unable to place two of the sequels into any of his three categories, one of them being the *Qílóu chóngmèng* discussed below. He also points out that in the sequels favouring Bǎochāi over Dàiyù, the latter is usually either a peripheral character or not part of the sequel at all. Not all sequels, therefore, support a reading of the *Hónglóu mèng* in which Dàiyù occupies one of the most central positions.

Still, the impression given is that most of the sequels focus on Bǎoyù and either Dàiyù or Bǎochāi or both—or their reincarnations or second-generation representations. If this is correct, the author of the last 40 chapters seems to have so successfully managed to establish the triangular

love story as the main storyline of the *Hónglóu mèng* that later sequel writers simply took it for granted.

While Xifèng (in otherworldly, resurrected or reincarnated form) is not entirely absent from the sequels, she is not their primary focus. At least, she is not the primary focus of the scholars who have studied the sequels. As we shall see below, she does play an important role in some sequels, and her lack of importance in the scholarly work on the sequels may be partly due to the same preconceived ideas that so often reduce her position in scholarly interpretations of the *Hónglóu mèng* itself.

Xiāoyáozi: Hòu Hónglóu mèng

It took only five years from the publication of the full 120-chapter version of the *Hónglóu mèng* to the publication of its first sequel, *Hòu Hónglóu mèng* by Xiāoyáozi.

The narrative of this sequel clearly grows out of a wish to thoroughly turn the tragedies of the original work into happy endings. First of all, Dàiyù and Qíngwén 晴雯 are brought back to life, the former in her original body (which had been preserved intact due to an amulet she kept in her mouth when she died), the latter in the body of the now dead Wú'ér 五兒. Second, Dàiyù is not only married to Bǎoyù, but is even given status as first wife before Bǎochāi. Third, the former inhabitants of the *Dàguān yuán* move back to the garden. Fourth, the Jiǎ family regains its former property and status. Fifth, Bǎoyù takes the *jìnshì* 進士 exam and is appointed *shidú xuéshì* 侍讀學士. Sixth, Xíchūn 惜春 is appointed imperial concubine and visits her home, just like Yuánchūn 元春 had done before her, only this time the extravagance of the first visit is replaced by a more frugal style.

A problem that many sequels encounter is how to write about characters that are already dead by the time the sequel starts. The present sequel solves the problem by means of resurrection. It is quite sparing in its use of this method, however, and only allows Bǎoyù's most intimate soulmates, Dàiyù and Qíngwén, to be come back to life.

Xifèng is, of course, dead before the sequel starts, and she does not return to life. She is, however, mentioned quite a few times, and by quite a

Misdeeds described both in the first 80 chapters and in the last 40 chapters are recounted, such as her driving Dàiyù, Jiǎ Ruì 賈瑞, and Yóu èrjiě 尤二姐 to death, as well as almost bringing down the family through her usury and bribery. Interestingly, this sequel adds its own interpretation of Xifèng's motivation for having Bǎoyù marry Bǎochāi and thereby driving Dàiyù to death. In the first chapter of this sequel, Jiǎ Zhèng 賈政 thinks to himself about Xifèng:

'After all, she was jealous of Dàiyù and feared that if Dàiyù became Bǎoyù's wife, she would grab a seat at the accountant's office. Therefore she secretly set up a trap and eventually made Dàiyù die from anger. This would also please Wáng fūrén 王夫人 [who was Bǎochāi's aunt], and by marrying Bǎochāi into the family, she got a loyal and week-willed person who did not mind other people's business, so that she herself could hold power over the whole mansion for ever.'

畢竟是他妒忌黛玉，只恐做了寶玉媳婦，便奪他這個榮國府的帳房一席。故此暗施毒計，活活地將黛玉氣死，順便又迎合了太太，娶了這個寶釵過來，忠忠厚厚，不管閑事，她便地久天長霸住這府。

Thus, this sequel takes over the strong guilt-orientation of the last 40 chapters, but brings it one step further.

The main protagonist of this sequel is Dàiyù, who is even more central than Bǎoyù. However, the Dàiyù of this sequel is quite different from the Dàiyù of the original work. At the beginning, she is an avid practitioner of Buddhist and Daoist meditation and seems reserved and aloof. Gradually, however, she develops into a capable and competent household manager, comparing favourably to the now dead Xifèng. She not only sets strict rules for the servants (as Xifèng did in chapter 13 of the original work), but even acts as advisor for Jiǎ Zhèng in his work as government official, and in the end she reveals that she would like to do something for the country, in the spirit of the famous military heroine Huā Mùlán 花木蘭. Thus, what we get is an "improved" version of Dàiyù, more conventionally acceptable than the frail and sometimes ill-tempered poor girl of the original work. Since she inherits many of Xifèng's traits, we could even call her an "improved" version of Xifèng, keeping Xifèng's talents but not her greed and selfishness.

Qín Zichén: Xù Hónglóu mèng

Three years after the *Hòu Hónglóu mèng*, in 1799, the next sequel appeared. It was the first of two sequels titled *Xù Hónglóu mèng*, this one written by Qín Zichén.

This sequel makes use of many of the same elements as the *Hòu Hónglóu mèng*. Like its predecessor, it brings dead people back to life, and in this case as many as 11 persons are resurrected. In addition, this sequel creates another way of including dead characters in the narrative: by making a large part of the sequel take place in the various otherworldly realms of the dead, especially the *Tàixū huànjìng* 太虛幻境 and the *Dìfǔ* 地府. Basically, the first half of the sequel takes place in the otherworldly realms, while most of the second half takes place in the world of mortals (and resurrected immortals). There is even contact between the worldly and otherworldly realms, allowing all characters both dead and alive to continue to interact.

Like its predecessor, this sequel turns the tragic endings of the *Hónglóu mèng* into happy endings, by recreating the pleasures of the *Dàguān yuán* (both in the earthly *Dàguān yuán* and in the *Tàixū huànjìng*), by including a second visit to the garden by an imperial concubine (in this case, the resurrected Yuánchūn), by letting Bǎoyù marry both Dàiyù and Bǎochāi, and by making Bǎoyù take the *jìnshì* exam and be given a high official title (in this case *hànlín shì* 翰林士). This sequel goes even further than its predecessor, by including a large number of marriages and childbirths, by giving official ranks to a number of characters, and by eventually rephrasing all negatively charged names and inscriptions, so that, for instance, *Líhèn tiān* 離恨天 'Realm of Separation' becomes *Bùhèn tiān* 補恨天 'Realm of Consolation' and *Bómìng sī* 薄命司 'Department of Ill Fate' becomes *Zhōngqíng sī* 鍾情司 'Department of Deep Love'.

The development of the triangular relation between Bǎoyù, Dàiyù and Bǎochāi is central in this sequel as it was in its predecessor, but now has more competition from other plots and subplots. Dàiyù is still an important character, but no longer dominates the narrative.

The first half of this sequel has a strong focus on guilt and karmic retribution. For instance, Xuē Pán's 薛蟠 killing of Féng Yuān 馮淵 is made up

a prostitute who then serves as Féng Yuān's concubine. In another case, Jiǎ Yíngchūn's 賈迎春 sadistic husband Sūn Shàozǔ 孫紹祖 is made into a husband who cares for and dotes on his wife. In both cases, justice is perceived as being restored. While the theme of guilt is largely inherited from the last 40 chapters, the possibility of atonement is more strongly emphasised in this sequel. It is the atonement of the first half of the sequel that makes possible the more idyllic scenes of the second half.

This sequel differs from its predecessor in including Xifèng in the narrative. She enters the story in chapter 2, as a new (i.e. recently dead) inhabitant of the *Tàixū huànjīng*, and the theme of guilt and atonement follows her in the first part of the sequel. As soon as she enters the *Tàixū huànjīng*, her past misdeeds are held against her by former victims like Yóu èrjiě and Lín Dàiyù, as well as by the imperial concubine Yuánchūn. After first trying to deny her guilt, Xifèng ends up asking for forgiveness. At one point, she is allowed a glimpse into the world of the living, and on seeing her husband Jiǎ Liǎn 賈璉 embracing the lascivious wife of Duō-húncóng 多渾蟲, she faints. She is also allowed a sightseeing tour in one of the hells. Here she meets with Jiǎ Ruì, who asks her to save him, but without success. She is then threatened by a woman named Zhāng Jīngē 張金哥, who had killed herself after Xifèng abused her power to force Jīngē's parents to drop her fiancé and accept another husband for her, and only by repenting and by having Jīngē and her fiancé brought together is she spared. She also meets with her old archenemy Zhào yíniáng and the sorceress Mǎ dào pó 馬道婆, who had tried to kill Xifèng and now asks her forgiveness and help (eventually getting it not from Xifèng but from Jiǎ mǔ 賈母). And in the end, she sees and is embraced by a naked woman who looks exactly like herself, but who is full of vinegar, a symbol of her jealousy. In the end, she attains some kind of enlightenment. After this long tour of hell, her sins seem to have been more or less atoned for, and from now guilt is no longer a central theme in the sequel. Xifèng is one of the eleven dead persons who are resurrected, and she is one of equally many characters who give birth to a child towards the end of the sequel. She and her daughter Qiǎojiě each happen to give birth to a son on the very same day. Xifèng has now been thoroughly redeemed.

Wáng Lánzhī: *Qílóu chóngmèng*

Another sequel published around 1799 is *Qílóu chóngmèng* by Wáng Lánzhī. This sequel differs from its predecessors in several respects:

First, it makes dead characters reenter the world of mortals through reincarnation rather than simple resurrection, all being reincarnated as sons and daughters of the characters of the original novel. The most extraordinary form of reincarnation is that of Bǎoyù, who is not dead but has followed the monk and the Daoist to the otherworldly realms as part of a spiritual journey, and who is reincarnated as Bǎochāi's son Xiǎoyù 小钰, who is actually his own son! Dàiyù is reincarnated as Shǐ Xiāngyún's 史湘雲 daughter Shùnhuá 舜華, Qíngwén as Xiānglíng's 香菱 daughter Dànrú 淡如, and Yuānyāng 鴛鴦 as Jiǎ Lán's 賈蘭 daughter. The fact that Bǎoyù (Xiǎoyù) is now Bǎochāi's son effectively removes Bǎochāi as an obstacle to the marriage between him and Dàiyù (Shùnhuá).

Second, the characters of this sequel have outstanding success not only in civil life, but also in war. After having learnt a number of supernatural military tricks, Xiǎoyù is appointed Generalissimo in Charge of Crushing the Japanese Pirates (*píng wō dà yuánshuài* 平倭大元帥), with several female family members as high commanders. Together they eventually manage to crush the Japanese army, restoring the lost honour of the family.

Third, Xiǎoyù is a notorious lecher, whose sexual escapades drive three girls out of the garden, one of them after having had an abortion. After this he finds his objects of desire outside the garden, where his sexual prowess is further intensified. In the end, he does marry Shùnhuá (Dàiyù's incarnation), but only as one of four equal wives, conferred upon him by the Emperor.

In spite of these differences, this sequel shares many elements with its predecessors: happy life in the garden, love and eventual marriage between Bǎoyù (Xiǎoyù) and Dàiyù (Shùnhuá), high official titles conferred by the Emperor, imperial concubines from the family (in this case two of the girls are chosen for the imperial harem), the family's loss of honour and material wealth followed by the restoration of both, a large number of marriages etc. In this respect, this sequel carries on the heritage from earlier sequels, including the last 40 chapters.

This sequel takes further than any earlier sequel the tendency to relegate Xifèng to the periphery. The book says nothing about her reincarnation, and with one insignificant exception (chapter 5) she is not even mentioned.

Chén Shàohǎi: *Hónglóu fùmèng*

Two sequels were printed around 1805, the first one being *Hónglóu fùmèng* by Chén Shàohǎi. Like the *Qilóu chóngmèng*, it primarily brings the dead back to the world of mortals by means of reincarnation. But this time, people are not reincarnated into the Jiǎ family, but into other families with whom the Jiǎ family are in close contact. The effect is the same: bringing together both dead and living characters from the original work. In addition, the dead sometimes communicate directly with the living through dreams and altered states of mind, and the borderline between the world of mortals and the otherworldly realms is quite fluid.

This sequel clearly belongs to the group of *Hónglóu mèng* sequels that favour Bǎochāi over Dàiyù. While Dàiyù's incarnation Sōng Cǎizhī 松彩芝 is married to Bǎoyù's incarnation Zhù Mèngyù 祝夢玉, she is only one of his large retinue of wives and concubines, and she does not seem to be favoured over the others. Bǎochāi, on the other hand, receives lavish praise for her administrative talent (described as better than Xifèng), good character (loved by the servants) and great wisdom (e.g. by acting coolly under a kitchen fire). She becomes a close friend of Mèngyù. The theme of war, and more specifically women at war, introduced by the *Qilóu chóngmèng*, is brought further when Bǎochāi is appointed commander-in-chief for an army of women that successfully crushes attacking tribes of barbarians. In the end, Bǎochāi looks through the world of dust, cultivates her mind and ends up in the world of immortals.

In contrast to the Xiǎoyù of *Qilóu chóngmèng*, the Mèngyù of *Hónglóu fùmèng* is not very interested in sex. Still, towards the end of the sequel, his many wives and concubines produce an impressive number of offspring. With regard to scholarship, Mèngyù takes the *jìnshì* exam and gets a position in the *Hànlín* Academy, just like Xiǎoyù in the earlier sequel.

Like earlier sequels, this one also has a happy ending. At one point, however, the Jiǎ family sells the *Dàguān yuán* and moves back to the south,

fortunately, they are able to return to the capital and repurchase the garden. And even before that, the garden idyll still lives on in the garden of the Zhù family, called the *Rúshì yuán* 如是園.

In large parts of this sequel, guilt and atonement (or even punishment) are central themes, and Xifèng plays a major role in their treatment. In a number of chapters at the beginning of the sequel, Jiǎ Liǎn leads a group of family members to visit her in hell. She begs them to help her atone for her sins, so that she can avoid further suffering and be reincarnated on earth. She is specifically concerned that measures are taken to right the wrongs she has inflicted on Zhāng Jīngē and Yóu èrjiě, and to return to its proper ownership a Buddha figure that she once stole. Jiǎ Liǎn helps her with this and in the process reaches enlightenment and becomes a monk who often returns later in the sequel to help family members.

After having atoned for her sins, Xifèng is reincarnated twice in the course of the sequel. First, she becomes Zhōu Wǎnzhēn 周婉貞, the daughter of a servant in the Zhù family. Wǎnzhēn's physical appearance resembles that of Xifèng, but unlike Xifèng she is well liked by everybody. As in Qín Zichén's *Xù Hónglóu mèng*, the process of atonement seems to have removed her negative character traits. The guilt theme, however, returns with a vengeance when in chapters 58–59 Wǎnzhēn is sexually molested and killed by her cousin Zhōng Qíng 鍾晴. Zhōng Qíng is the reincarnation of Jiǎ Ruì, who in chapter 11–12 in the original *Hónglóu mèng* had fallen in love with Xifèng but been driven to death by her. The killing of Wǎnzhēn, therefore, is an act of karmic retribution. Later, Xifèng is reincarnated once more, this time as the little girl Bǎozhū 寶珠. She is born blind and with eyes closed, but after having been reminded of her true identity, she opens her eyes and sees clearly.

Hǎipǔ zhūrén: *Xù Hónglóu mèng*

The second of the two sequels printed around 1805 was also the second of two sequels titled *Xù Hónglóu mèng*, this one by Hǎipǔ zhūrén. Unlike earlier sequels, this one is not primarily concerned with bringing dead characters back to the narrative by reincarnation, resurrection or visits to otherworldly realms. The main protagonist is Bǎoyù's and Bǎochāi's son Jiǎ

Mào 賈茂, who marries Xuě Bǎoqín's 薛寶琴 daughter Yuè'é 月娥. Many of the old family members are still alive and play central roles in the narrative.

The bonds to the otherworldly realms, however, are far from completely broken. Bǎoyù still plays a central role from his otherworldly existence as Fūwén zhēnrén 敷文真人. He helps many of the mortals in their worldly pursuits, especially when they participate in the many examinations described. Even Dàiyù, in her otherworldly existence as Xiāoxiāng xiānzi 瀟湘仙子, is briefly brought back to earth in a planchette writing séance, but unfortunately she does not remember anything from her mortal existence.

More importantly, Jiǎ Mào is born holding a jade in his hand identical to the one Bǎoyù kept in his mouth at birth, so in a way Jiǎ Mào is a continuation of his father Bǎoyù. And Yuè'é, who becomes Jiǎ Mào's wife, is born holding a golden talisman in her hand, reminiscent of the golden amulet kept by her aunt Bǎochāi. The marriage between Jiǎ Mào and Yuè'é, which is clearly predestined, may be seen as a confirmation of the bond between gold (Bǎochāi) and jade (Bǎoyù) in the original *Hónglóu mèng*. In a round-about way, therefore, this sequel also has a focus on the triangular love story and seems to belong to the group of sequels favouring Bǎochāi over Dàiyù (whose spirit, at the very outset of the sequel, is sent to the *Tàixū huànjìng* to cultivate her mind and overcome her bad speech habits).

Even more than in earlier sequels, the protagonists have conventional values and are highly successful. Jiǎ Mào has great success in examinations, and the emperor personally appoints him *zhuàngyuán* 狀元. Like in the *Hòu Hónglóu mèng*, the emperor appoints Xíchūn imperial concubine. The good name of the Jiǎ family, therefore, is completely restored. Bǎochāi and Tànchūn order a thorough renovation of the *Dàguān yuán*, and the Poetry Club is re-established. The novel ends with joyful celebrations of Jiǎ Zhèng's 100th anniversary.

Xifèng has no part in this sequel. Memories of her are mentioned a few times, primarily because of the likeness between her and her daughter Qiǎojiě. Qiǎojiě is married into the Zhōu 周 family, as promised in the last 40 chapters of the *Hónglóu mèng*, but often returns to visit her old friends and relatives.

Modernity vs. high culture

Let us now return to the theme of modernity mentioned at the beginning of this paper. To what extent does our discussion of these six sequels (including the last 40 chapters) confirm our suspicion that the *Hónglóu mèng* represents a possible path towards modernity, while the readings of the novel that underlie the sequels represent a step backwards, a path away from modernity?

The fact that the triangular love relation between Bǎoyù, Dàiyù and Bǎochāi becomes a more central focus in the sequels than in the 80-chapter *Hónglóu mèng*, while the storyline relating to Xifèng is either lost or reduced to one focusing on guilt and atonement, points to a simplification of the plot structure, thematics and ideology underlying the novel. This begins in the last 40 chapters, but is taken much further in the later sequels.

The fact that the protagonists end up with much more conventional (so-called Confucian) values in the sequels than in the original points in the same direction. Again this starts in the last 40 chapters, but is taken further in later sequels.

And the fact that all the sequels (to some extent even the last 40 chapters) have happy endings show how uncomfortable many readers must have been with the tragic element of the original novel.

So far, I have not had much to say about psychological subtleties in these sequels. The reason is simple. Apart from the last 40 chapters, the sequels show little interest in nuanced psychological description. They are mostly action-oriented, and even their lyrical descriptions are more often external than internal. The feelings expressed are simple and straightforward: happiness, sadness, anger, desire etc.

We have seen how all sequels pick up elements from preceding sequels, so that each sequel builds on a reading not only of the 80-chapter *Hónglóu mèng*, but also of other sequels.

When all is said and done, however, it is not obvious that the subtleties and complexities of the original 80-chapter *Hónglóu mèng* are due to its modernity, nor is it obvious that the lack of such in the sequels is due to their being less modern. To a large extent, the features in question belong to the fictional and/or lyrical tradition that the *Hónglóu mèng* grew out of.

no earlier work may compare with the ingenuity of the *Hónglóu mèng*, but this is also true of later Chinese works of fiction, no matter how "modern" or even "post-modern".

As suggested to me by Kuo Yu-wen (personal communication), an equally plausible view is that the original *Hónglóu mèng* represents the high culture of scholars and literati, while its sequels cater to the low culture of a much larger group of "ordinary" people. It is this low culture that demands happy endings, conventional values and simple theme and plot structures. Tragic or unresolved endings, for instance, are not new in Chinese literature (cf. the *Jīn Píng Méi* 金瓶梅, the *Yīngyīng zhuàn* 鶯鶯傳, or an enormous corpus of poetry concerned with loss, sadness and sorrow, starting from the *Chǔcí* 楚辭), but they are typically avoided in most genres catering to the general public, such as drama (cf. the happy ending of the *Xīxiāng jì* 西廂記, as opposed to the original story in the *Yīngyīng zhuàn*).

It remains true that the original 80-chapter *Hónglóu mèng* shows a keen interest in the psychological dimensions and the complex and tragic aspects of human life, and that we often associate this with modernity. It also remains true that these features are largely lost in the sequels, and that the readings of the novel on which the sequels build now seem dated and, well, unmodern. Tragic endings are no longer provocative, and the same is true of unconventional heroes. In fact, after the May 4th period, it has probably become easier to accept Bǎoyù as an unconventional (and anti-Confucian) hero than a conventional one. However, some of the unmodern features of the readings on which the sequels build are still current both in popular views and among scholars. One of these regards the exaggerated focus on the triangular love story and the accompanying focus on Dàiyù, at the expense of the less romantic aspects of the novel, including the rise and fall of Xifèng. If the *Hónglóu mèng* represents a path to modernity, therefore, we have yet to walk a substantial distance before we reach the final destination of this path.

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晚清辞书视野中的“文学”： 以黄人的编纂活动为中心

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1899年，梁启超在《清议报》上连载“自由书”，曾接过日本人犬养毅的话头，论证为何要将学校、报纸、演说作为“传播文明三利器”。学校培育人才，古今概莫例外；倒是报纸与演说的关系，值得一说：“大抵国民识字多者，当利用报纸；国民识字少者，当利用演说。”¹此说不脛而走，不只深刻影响晚清的思想文化进程，也为后世史家之“进入晚清”，提供了极大的便利。但“报纸”、“演说”多即兴之作，且主要针对时下，有启蒙之功，却非知识增长的最佳途径。费时费力较多、讲究通力合作，故无法千里走单骑马的辞书出版以及教科书编撰，如强劲的后卫，支撑着整个社会的学术积累与知识创新。正如商务印书馆早期功臣高梦旦在《新字典序》（1912）中所说的，“教育之普及，常识之备具，教科书辞书之功为多”。辞书及教科书之不取先锋姿态，而以系统论述见长，与“百年树人”的教育宗旨更为吻合。在这个意义上，不妨将学校、辞书、教科书作为另一个“传播文明三利器”。

就在满清王朝寿终正寝的前夕，上海国学扶轮社出版了东吴大学教授黄人（1866-1913，字摩西）编著的《普通百科新大辞典》和《中国文学史》。刚刚崛起的社会组织（大学、出版社）与新型出版物（百科辞书、教科书），二者的合作竟如此天衣无缝，让我们得以一窥晚清西学东渐的蹒跚步伐。考虑到黄摩西在东吴大学教的是“国文”与“国学”，本文将以其编纂活动为中心，讨论现代中国的“文学”概念，是如何在晚清辞书的视野中得以浮现的。

¹ 《饮冰室自由书·传播文明三利器》，《饮冰室合集·专集》第一册，上海：中华书局，1936年。

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